

Appl. No. : **09/873,339**
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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 10, 16 and 24 as indicated below.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for collecting machine identifying information associated with a digital online access device used for substantially anonymously accessing a host computer system over a digital network, said host computer system generating an interaction record of an access therewith by said access device, and said process comprising:

(a) capturing a machine fingerprint that identifies said access device accessing said host computer system wherein said machine fingerprint comprises a hashed attribute string that is a concatenation of attributes associated with said access device;

(b) generating a unique—interaction identification string upon said access device accessing said host computer system;

(c) associating said interaction identification string with said machine fingerprint; and

(d) associating said interaction identification string with said interaction record generated upon said access device accessing said host computer system.

2. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 1 further comprising :

(a) capturing a digital address of said access device on said digital network.

3. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said hashed attribute string comprises:

(a) a configuration setting of said access device.

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4. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 1 further comprising:

- (a) communicating a self-identification routine to said access device upon said access device accessing said host computer system;
- (b) said access device executing said self-identification routine;
- (c) said self-identification routine querying a configuration setting of said access device to derive said machine fingerprint; and
- (d) said self-identification routine communicating said machine fingerprint to a remote location for association with said interaction identification string.

5. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 1 further comprising:

- (a) said host system operating a host web site including an interaction page generated by interaction page code processed by said access device upon accessing said host web site; and
- (b) coding, within said interaction code, a self-identification routine which causes said access device to communicate said machine fingerprint when said access device processes said interaction page code.

6. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 3 further comprising:

- (a) coding said self-identification routine in such a manner that said machine fingerprint and said interaction identification string are communicated to a third party web site at which said machine fingerprint and said interaction identification string are stored.

7. (Previously Presented) A process for identifying a customer computer involved in an online transaction between a customer using a customer browser operating on said customer computer and a merchant operating a merchant web site, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) capturing a machine fingerprint of a customer computer upon said customer computer accessing said merchant web site wherein said machine fingerprint comprises a hashed attribute string associated with one or more attributes of said customer computer;

(b) generating a transaction identification string and associating said string with said machine fingerprint;

(c) storing said machine fingerprint and said transaction identification string in a machine data archive;

(d) upon said customer completing a transaction through said merchant web site, storing said transaction identification string with a transaction record formed during said transaction to thereby associate said machine fingerprint with said transaction record through said transaction identification string.

8. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 7 further comprising :

(a) capturing an IP address of said customer computer.

9. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 7 wherein said machine fingerprint comprises

a configuration setting of said customer computer.

10. (Currently Amended) A process as set forth in Claim 7 comprising:

(a) communicating said machine fingerprint and said transaction identification string to a third party web site for storage.

11. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 7 further comprising:

(a) causing said customer computer to communicate said machine fingerprint and said transaction identification string to a third party web site for storage.

12. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 7 further comprising:

(a) communicating a self-identification routine to said customer computer upon said customer computer accessing said merchant web site;

(b) said customer computer executing said self-identification routine;

(c) said self-identification routine querying a configuration setting of said customer computer to derive said machine fingerprint; and

(d) said self-identification routine communicating said machine fingerprint to a remote location for association with said interaction identification string.

13. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 12 further comprising:

(a) coding said self-identification routine in such a manner that said machine fingerprint and said interaction identification string are communicated to a third party web site at which said profile parameter and said interaction identification string are stored.

14. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 12 wherein said querying step further comprises:

(a) querying said customer browser for a plurality of configuration settings;

(b) forming an attribute string from said plurality of configuration settings; and

(c) hashing said attribute string to form said machine fingerprint of said customer computer.

15. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 12 wherein said customer computer potentially accesses said merchant web site by way of a proxy, and said communicating step further comprises:

(a) communicating said machine fingerprint and said transaction identification string to said remote web site using a protocol which bypasses said proxy.

16. (Currently Amended) A process for identifying a customer computer involved in an online transaction through a merchant web site between a customer using a customer browser operating on said customer computer and a merchant who operates said web site, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) coding a script request within a transaction form of said merchant web site;

(b) processing said script request by said customer browser upon accessing said merchant web site to thereby communicate to an archiver web site of a machine data archiving service an electronic request for a machine data collection script;

(c) said archiver web site returning said script to said customer browser along with a unique transaction identification string;

(d) said customer browser processing said script to thereby cause said script to query said customer computer for a machine fingerprint of said customer computer wherein said machine fingerprint comprises a hashed attribute string associated with one or more attributes of said customer computer;

(e) said script causing said customer browser to communicate said machine fingerprint and said transaction identification string to said archiver web site;

(f) said archiver web site storing said machine fingerprint and said transaction identification string in a machine data profile;

(g) said script causing said customer browser to write said transaction identification string into said transaction form; and

(h) upon said customer adding customer identification information to said transaction form and electronically submitting said transaction form to said merchant web site to thereby comprise a transaction record, said transaction identification string associating said transaction record with said machine data profile.

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17. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 16 further comprising:

(a) said script causing said computer browser to communicate said machine fingerprint and said transaction identification string along with a conventional hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) header; and

(b) said archiver service additionally storing said HTTP header in association with said machine data profile.

18. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 16 further comprising:

(a) said script querying said customer browser for a configuration setting thereof.

19. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 16 further comprising:

(a) said script querying said customer browser for a plurality of configuration settings;

(b) said script forming an attribute string from said plurality of configuration settings; and

(c) said script processing said attribute string to form said machine fingerprint of said customer computer.

20. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 19 further comprising:

(a) said script performing a hashing function on said attribute string to form said machine fingerprint.

21. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 16 wherein said customer computer potentially accesses said merchant web site by way of a proxy, said process further comprising:

(a) said script communicating said machine fingerprint and said transaction identification string to said archiver service web site using a protocol which bypasses said proxy.

22. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 16 further comprising:

(a) said script communicating said profile parameter to said archiver service web site using a protocol other than HTTP.

23. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 16 wherein said customer computer comprises a digital clock, and further comprising:

(a) said script causing said customer browser to query said clock for a time value; and

(b) said script causing said customer browser to send said time value to said archiver service web site along with said machine fingerprint.

24. (Currently Amended) A process for identifying a customer computer involved in an online transaction through a merchant web site between a customer using a customer browser operating on said customer computer and merchant who operates said web site, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) coding a script request within a transaction form of said merchant web site;

(b) processing said script request by said customer browser upon accessing said merchant web site to thereby communicate to an archiver web site of a machine data archiving service an electronic request for a machine data collection script;

(c) said archiver web site returning said script to said customer browser along with a ~~unique~~ transaction identification string;

(d) said customer browser processing said script to thereby cause said script to:

(1) query said customer browser for a plurality of configuration settings;

(2) form an attribute string from said plurality of configuration settings;

(3) perform a hashing function on said attribute string to form a machine fingerprint of said customer computer; and

(4) query an internal digital clock of said customer computer for a current time value.

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(e) said script causing said customer browser to communicate said machine fingerprint, said time value, and said transaction identification string to said archiver web site along with a conventional HTTP header;

(f) said archiver web site storing said machine fingerprint, said time value, and said transaction identification string in a machine data profile;

(g) said script causing said customer browser to write said transaction identification string into said transaction form; and

(h) upon said customer adding customer identification information to said transaction form and electronically submitting said transaction form to said merchant web site to thereby comprise a transaction record, said transaction identification string associating said transaction record with said machine data profile.

25. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 24 wherein said customer computer potentially accesses said merchant web site by way of a proxy, said process further comprising:

(a) said script querying said customer computer for a second profile parameter; and

(b) said script communicating said second profile parameter and said transaction identification string to said archiver service web site using a protocol which bypasses said proxy.

26. (Previously Presented) A process as set forth in Claim 25 further comprising:

(a) said script communicating said second profile parameter to said archiver service web site using a protocol other than HTTP.